

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS
SUBJECT: KONTOS MEETINGS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY

SUMMARY. SSM DIRECTOR KONTOS, THORNE, AND "E" SYSTEMS CHAIRMAN DIXON, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM, MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON AND DIRECTOR GENERAL AVINERI ON JULY 7. BOTH ALLON AND AVINERI SPOKE OF THEIR HIGH REGARD FOR THE SINAI FIELD MISSION AND THE ROLE IT WAS PLAYING. ALLON SAID THAT THE SFM SERVED THE INTEREST OF BOTH PARTIES: OTHERWISE IT WOULDN'T LAST. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO LOOK AT THE SFM WHEN HE VISITS THE SOUTHERN FRONT IN A FEW WEEKS AND WILLINGLY ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FOR A VISIT AT THAT TIME. AVINERI SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THE EGYPTIANS REGARDED THE SFM AS A POSSIBLE MODEL FOR OTHER AREAS OF DISENGAGEMENT, INCLUDING A FINAL "SECURE" LINE BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. ALLON DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE TIME TO A DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS, AND WAS MILDLY CRITICAL OF U.S. FAILURE TO USE ITS FULL POWER IN THE AREA, E.G., IN REACTION TO THE MELOY MURDER. END OF SUMMARY.

1. ALLON BEGAN BY EXPRESSING ADMIRATION FOR THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE SINAI FIELD MISSION HAD BEEN PUT INTO PLACE AND SEEMED PLEASED WITH KONTOS' STATEMENT THAT THE GOI HAD BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE EXTREMELY COOPERATIVE AND HELPFUL. ALLON SAID THAT HE REGARDS THE SFM AS SERVING THE INTERESTS
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OF BOTH PARTIES: OTHERWISE IT WOULDN'T LAST. HE REFERRED TO

PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S STATEMENT BEFORE CONGRESS THAT THE GOI DID NOT WANT THE AMERICANS AT THE SFM TO PARTICIPATE IN A WAR. THIS REMAINED THE GOI POSITION, HE SAID. OUR PRESENCE IN THE SFM HELPED MAINTAIN THE SINAI II AGREEMENT, EVEN BEYOND ITS CONTRIBUTION IN KEEPING BORDERS INVIOATE. IT COULD CREATE A NEW AREA OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE. THIS LED THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO REFER TO ISRAEL'S "MISTAKE" OF 1949 WHEN, AS HE PUT IT, UNDER U.S. INFLUENCE IT HAD AGREED TO SIGN AN ARMISTICE INSTEAD OF HOLDING OUT FOR A PEACE TREATY. HE WAS CERTAIN THAT THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN THE EGYPTIANS WOULD REALIZE THAT A PEACE TREATY WAS NEEDED; THEN HE HOPED THE MODULES AT SFM COULD BE TURNED INTO MOTELS.

2. TURNING TO IDF COLONEL LEVINSON, ALLON SAID THAT HE WOULD BE VISITING THE SOUTHERN FRONT IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. HE HOPED THAT THE IDF WOULD TAKE HIM AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE SFM. THORNE SUGGESTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT THE SFM WHEN HE WAS IN THE SINAI AND ALLON READILY CONSENTED.

3. REGARDING THE ENTEBBE OPERATION, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HIS CHIEF WORRY WAS THAT THE ISRAELIS NOT GET "DRUNK WITH EUPHORIA." HE WAS CERTAIN THAT SOMEONE SOMEWHERE WAS PLANNING ANOTHER ACTION AGAINST THEM.

4. ON MORE GENERAL ISSUES, ALLON SAID THAT ISRAEL HAD TWICE WITHDRAWN FROM THE SINAI UNDER U.S. PRESSURE. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT JOHNSON, WHO HAD BEEN "MORE ENLIGHTENED," HAD NOT INSISTED IN 1967 ON AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. ALLON SAID HE HAD AT THAT TIME TOLD THE SECRETARY OF STATE: "LET US TRY OUR WAY." ONE LESSON WHICH HAD TO BE LEARNED FROM 1967 IS THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM. THEREFORE, PATIENCE WAS REQUIRED.

5. GOING FURTHER AFIELD, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE FORESEES A GREAT CRISIS IN THE SOVIET BLOC IN THE FUTURE BECAUSE OF THE WEAKNESS OF ITS ECONOMY. ONE HAD ONLY TO REFLECT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RECENT TROUBLES CAUSED BY POLISH WORKERS AND FARMERS. IF THOSE WHO PRACTICED DEMOCRACY WOULD GET TOGETHER THEY COULD, AMONG OTHER THINGS, CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE "CAPTURED" AFRICA EASILY. HE, OF COURSE, DID NOT MEAN CAPTURE IN THE SENSE OF DOMINATING BUT IN BRINGING THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES INTO THE WESTERN ORBIT RATHER THAN LETTING THEM SLIDE INTO THE SOVIET ORBIT. IN THIS CONNECTION HE REFERRED APPROVINGLY TO ISRAEL'S POLICY OF WORKING ON THE GROUND WITH THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES EVEN BEFORE THEY OBTAINED THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

6. RETURNING TO THE MIDDLE EAST, ALLON SAID THAT THE U.S. HAD DONE QUITE WELL IN SUCCEEDING IN REESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITHIN THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS WITH A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN QUITE ANTAGONISTIC. THE SOVIETS CAN ONLY CREATE TROUBLE IN THE AREA; THEY CAN BUILD NOTHING. THERE ARE EXPECTATIONS AND FEARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THE ONLY REAL ARAB HOPE IS THAT U.S. WILL EXERCISE INFLUENCE ON ISRAEL. IT IS THE ONLY COUNTRY WHICH CAN DO SO.

7. THE FOREIGN MINISTER THEN RECOUNTED THE EVENTS OF 1970. WHEN A CRISIS THREATENED IN JORDAN, THE ISRAELIS HAD RETALIATED BY OSTENTATIONALLY MOVING ARMORED AND OTHER UNITS AND HAD FLOWN PHANTOMS AT LOW ALTITUDE OVER IRAQI FORCES, ETC. ISRAEL HAD TOLD THE U.S. AT THAT TIME: "DON'T WORRY ABOUT OUR NEIGHBORS; YOU CHECK THE RUSSIANS." BECAUSE PRESIDENT NIXON HAD ADOPTED THIS SUGGESTION, ALLON SAID, THE CRISIS HAD BEEN ENDED WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AND NOT ONE SHELL HAD BEEN FIRED.

8. AS TO LEBANON, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT "WITHOUT US" THE MARONITES WOULD HAVE BEEN FINISHED LONG AGO. "WE KEEP THE BALANCE BY JUST BEING HERE." HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT ONCE A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED IN LEBANON THERE WILL BE A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE PLO. THE SYRIAN BAATH PARTY WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE ANY PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE CHRISTIANS. THE GIO DID NOT WANT SYRIA TO ACHIEVE DOMINANCE IN LEBANON. PERSONALLY, ALLON SIAD, HE BELIEVES THAT LEBANON SHOULD BE REDESIGNED IN SOME CANTONAL FORM, WITH CANTONS FOR CHRISTIANS, MUSLIMS, DRUZE, AND PERHAPS FOR OTHERS. TURNING TO THE MELOY MURDER, ALLON SAID HE WAS CONCERNED BY OUR LACK OF REACTION. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT A GREAT POWER HAD ONLY

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THE CHOICE OF DOING EVERYTHING OR OF DOING NOTHING (THIS IN RESPONSE TO KONTOS' POINTING OUT CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION CONSTRAINTS ON U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES). HE WOULD HAVE RECOMMENDED DEPLOYMENT OF OUR INTERVENTION POWER IN CONNECTION WITH SEVERAL OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES (HE NEITHER SPECIFIED THE COUNTRIES NOR THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVENTION). THE FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDED BY SAYING - AND STRESSING THAT WE SHOULD REPORT THIS TO WASHINGTON - THAT IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE SECURE AND DEFENSIBLE BORDERS.

9. IN A SEPARATE MEETING, DIRECTOR GENERAL AVINERI EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN KONTOS' REMARK THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE THINKING THAT THE SFM MIGHT BE AN EVENTUAL MODEL FOR

OTHER AREAS, INCLUDING A FINAL "SECURE" LINE WITH ISRAEL. AVINERI SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR THIS SINCE IT CLEARLY REPRESENTS WHAT HE CONSIDERED FORWARD THINKING ON THE PART OF THE EGYPTIANS. HE ADDED THAT THE GOI HAD BEEN DIS-APPOINTED BY THE EGYPTIAN STATEMENT ON THE ENTEBBE INCIDENT. THEY THOUGHT IT UNNECESSARILY SHARP AND CONDEMNATORY AND COULD ONLY LIKEN IT TO THE RECENT EGYPTIAN SPONSORSHIP OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

10. COMMENT: BOTH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND AVINERI WERE RELAXED AND APPARENTLY SINCERE IN THEIR LAUDATORY COMMENTS ABOUT THE SFM. THE QUESTIONS THEY ASKED ABOUT IT WERE MAINLY OF A TECHNICAL NATURE AND BOTH EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH IT HAD BEEN ERRECTED SO SPEEDILY. THEY USED THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE KONTOS VISIT TO GET OFF THEIR CHESTS CERTAIN MORE GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE SINAI FIELD MISSION WHICH THEY, LIKE OTHERS TO WHOM KONTOS AND DIXON TALKED, INDICATED WAS CAUSING THEM NO PROBLEMS; ON THE CONTRARY THE SFM WAS SEEN AS A STABILIZING FACTOR ON THEIR FRONT WITH EGYPT.
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